

Message Text

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PAGE 01 MBABAN 01432 261738Z

ACTION AF-10

INFO OCT-01 IO-13 ISO-00 H-01 HA-05 SSO-00 /030 W

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FM AMEMBASSY MBABANE

TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 4596

INFO USMISSION GENEVA

C O N F I D E N T I A L MBABANE 1432

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PINS SREF WZ

SUBJECT: SWAZILAND: CONGRESSIONAL INTEREST IN GOS HANDLING
OF REFUGEES

REF: STATE 104284 AND PREVIOUS

1. SUMMARY. CONGRESSMAN BERKELY BEDELL TELEPHONED ME HERE LATE AFTERNOON (LOCAL TIME) APRIL 25. HE HAD JUST SPOKEN BY PHONE WITH HIS SON, KEN BEDELL, WHO HAD TOLD HIS FATHER OF INFORMATION HE THOUGHT WAS IMPORTANT IN CONNECTION WITH MEETING SCHEDULED WITH PRIME MINISTER MAPHEVU DLAMINI APRIL 26. AT CONGRESSMAN'S REQUEST, WE IMMEDIATELY CONTACTED HIS SON, WHO WAS IN MBABANE, AND MET WITH HIM FOR TWO HOURS. THIS MESSAGE REPORTS KEN BEDELL'S CONCERN AND STEPS WE ARE TAKING TO DEAL WITH IT. UNLESS DEPARTMENT SEES OBJECTION, REQUEST CONGRESSMAN BEDELL BE GIVEN A SUMMARY OF THE FOLLOWING REPORT BUT EXCLUDING FYI SECTION. END SUMMARY.

2. KEN BEDELL'S CONCERN CENTERS ON 41 SOWETO REFUGEES BEING HELD BY SWAZI GOVERNMENT. HIS INFORMATION WAS THAT GOS CABINET WOULD MEET MORNING APRIL 26 TO CONSIDER WHETHER THEY SHOULD BE EXPELLED AS PROHIBITED IMMIGRANTS (P'D). IT WAS RECOGNIZED THAT THE UNHCR IS PRIMARILY

INVOLVED; UNHCR REP SABITI HAS TAKEN THE LEAD IN
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PAGE 02 MBABAN 01432 261738Z

TRYING TO PREVENT PI ACTION BECAUSE OF ADDITIONAL PROBLEMS AND DELAYS IT CREATES (A) IN GETTING COUNTRIES TO TAKE REFUGEES AND (B) IN PLACING THEM IN SCHOOLS IN THESE COUNTRIES. GIVEN THE DESIRE OF GOS TO GET THE REFUGEE STUDENTS OUT, THE STUDENTS' EAGERNESS TO LEAVE, AND THE FACT P'I'NG WOULD BE AN IMPEDIMENT TO ONWARD MOVEMENT AND PLACEMENT, THERE

SEEMED TO BE A MUTUALITY OF INTERESTS IN NOT DECLARING THE STUDENTS PROHIBITED IMMIGRANTS. BEDELL URGED THAT I INTERENE WITH THE PM BY PHONE PRIOR TO THE CABINET MEETING.

3. I THANKED MR. BEDELL FOR TAKING THE TIME TO GIVE ME HIS VIEWS AND SAID I WOULD LOOK INTO WAYS OF COMMUNICATING WITH THE PM TO DISCOURAGE THE GOS ACTION. I NOTED THAT MANY CONSIDERATIONS WERE INVOLVED, INCLUDING THE LIKELY EFFECT (AND EFFECTIVENESS) OF A PHONE CALL ON ONE ASPECT OF AN ISSUE GIVEN THE LONG AGENDA OF HUMAN RIGHTS AND RELATED ISSUES TO TAKE UP WITH PRIMIN. I SAID WE WOULD CONSIDER THE PI ISSUE IN THE CONTEXT OF OUR OVERALL POLICY OBJECTIVES.

4. FYI: WE DID NOT REVEAL THAT UNHCR HIGH COMMISSIONER POUL HARTLING HAD SENT A STRONGLY-WORDED TELEGRAM TO PRIMIN URGING THAT REFUGEE STUDENTS BE PERMITTED TO CONTINUE SCHOOLING AT THOKOZA WHICH IS FINANCED BY UNHCR. HARTLING'S TELEGRAM WAS TRANSMITTED TO PRIMIN BY SABITI AND REPRESENTS FORCEFUL INTERVENTION TO DISCOURAGE PI ACTION BY GOS. END FYI.

5. THIS MORNING (APRIL 26) PM'S OFFICE TOLD US CABINET MEETING SCHEDULED FOR TODAY HAD BEEN CANCELLED AND PM WAS NOT TAKING ANY APPOINTMENTS (PRESUMABLY TO REST
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PAGE 03 MBABAN 01432 261738Z

UP FROM RETURN APRIL 25 FROM MEDICAL CHECKUP IN SWITZERLAND). IN MEETING WITH SABITI TO DISCUSS THE SITUATION (DETAILS SEPTTEL), HE SAID HE THOUGH OUR PROPOSED INTERVENTION WITH PM BY MEANS OF HANDWRITTEN NOTE OUTLINE BRIEFLY REASONS AGAINST PI ACTION BY GOS WOULD BE HELPFUL. I AM, THEREFORE, PLANNING TO SEND SUCH A NOTE IN ADVANCE OF CABINET MEETING.

6. ACTION REQUESTED: WOULD APPRECIATE DEPARTMENT CONVEYING ABOVE (EXCEPT REPEAT EXCEPT FOR FYI SECTION) TO CONGRESSMAN BEDELL.
NORLAND

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Message Attributes

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